



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND HOMELAND SECURITY**



**Public Hearing – February 18, 2010
Public Safety and Security Committee**

**Testimony Submitted by:
Commissioner Peter J. Boynton
Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security**

Good Morning Senator Stillman, Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to comment on two bills before you today.

The first bill I would like to comment on is Senate Bill 148-An Act Concerning The Term “Emergency Management Director” and Redefining “Major Disaster” and “Emergency”.

This bill makes the definitions of “major disaster” and “emergency” clearer and easier to apply during an emergency situation by redefining “major disaster” to include catastrophes for which the Governor has declared a civil preparedness emergency and by redefining “emergency” to include state-declared emergencies. Currently, the definitions mirror the federal Stafford Act language, to be used only when a disaster or emergency rises to the level of a Presidential declaration. This change reflects the actual usage of these terms on the state level.

The bill also changes the term “local civil preparedness director” to local emergency management director. Although we view the two terms as interchangeable, these individuals—who serve as critical links between local response disciplines, local government, and DEMHS—are most often now referred to as “emergency management” rather than “civil preparedness” directors.

The second bill I would like to comment on is Senate Bill 149- An Act Concerning The Governor’s Power to Modify or Suspend Statutes, Regulations or Other Requirements During a Public Health Emergency.

This bill would extend the Governor’s authority to temporarily modify or suspend any statute, regulation or requirement, not just during a civil preparedness emergency—which she currently has the authority to do—but during a public health emergency as well. This proposal is the result of a collaborative effort between DEMHS and the Department of Public Health. Working together during this most recent H1N1 outbreak, we realized that, by making this change, we could clarify the State’s ability to mitigate the effect of a public health emergency. This is an example of preparedness in advance of an emergency, so that if and when the state faces another H1N1 outbreak, or other public health incident, we are fully prepared to manage the crisis.

We understand there was a drafting error with regard to lines 10 and 11 and we look forward to seeing a revised version at the JFS stage.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of these two pieces of legislation.